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Lower Duwamish River Sampling Seattle, WA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be conducting an assessment of the lower Duwamish River this summer.

Why is EPA Involved?

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) petitioned EPA to conduct an assessment of the lower Duwamish River. The federal Superfund Law, also known as CERCLA, allows the public and other agencies to request EPA to conduct assessments of potential releases of hazardous substances. NOAA has responsibility under the Superfund law to protect natural resources in coastal and marine waters, which includes salmon and other fish species found in the Duwamish River. NOAA is concerned about contamination in the whole Duwamish waterway and what kind of impacts the contamination is having on the fish species.

What is an EPA Assessment?

In general, an assessment process is used to determine which sites qualify for the National Priorities List (NPL), which is a listing of the nations priorities for full scale environmental investigation and possible cleanup. Samples are collected to determine what hazardous substances are present at the site and whether the substances are being released into the environment.

Typically an assessment includes a Preliminary Assessment (PA) and a Site Investigation (SI). The PA activities include file information review and a site visit. SI activities include review of any available data, development of field work plans, field sampling and filling data gaps. When it is clear that a site warrants a SI, combining the PA and SI reduces costs and repetitive tasks.

What is Planned for the Lower Duwamish?

This fall, EPA will begin sampling from near the southern end of Harbor Island (approximately river kilometer 1.5) to just south of the turning basin (approximately river kilometer 11.5). Sediment and core samples will be taken from the river and slips and analyzed for a number of hazardous substances. EPA will not be conducting any upland (soil) sampling during this assessment.

How Does This Relate to Other Projects in the Area Like the Brownfields Showcase Community, Habitat Restoration Plans, and Other Water Quality Efforts?

EPA is aware of a multitude of projects and other efforts to restore and enhance the Duwamish river corridor both environmentally and economically. EPA is currently working with the City of Seattle and King County on development of their Brownfields Showcase Community Workplan and has made them aware of the upcoming Duwamish study so they can plan to make use of the results as appropriate. One of their priorities is completion of an ongoing study of groundwater pathways in the Duwamish corridor, and another is planning for preservation and restoration of salmon habitat. This project will complement those endeavors by increasing the understanding of the health of the river so that beneficial use can be maintained for all river users.

What Happens Next?

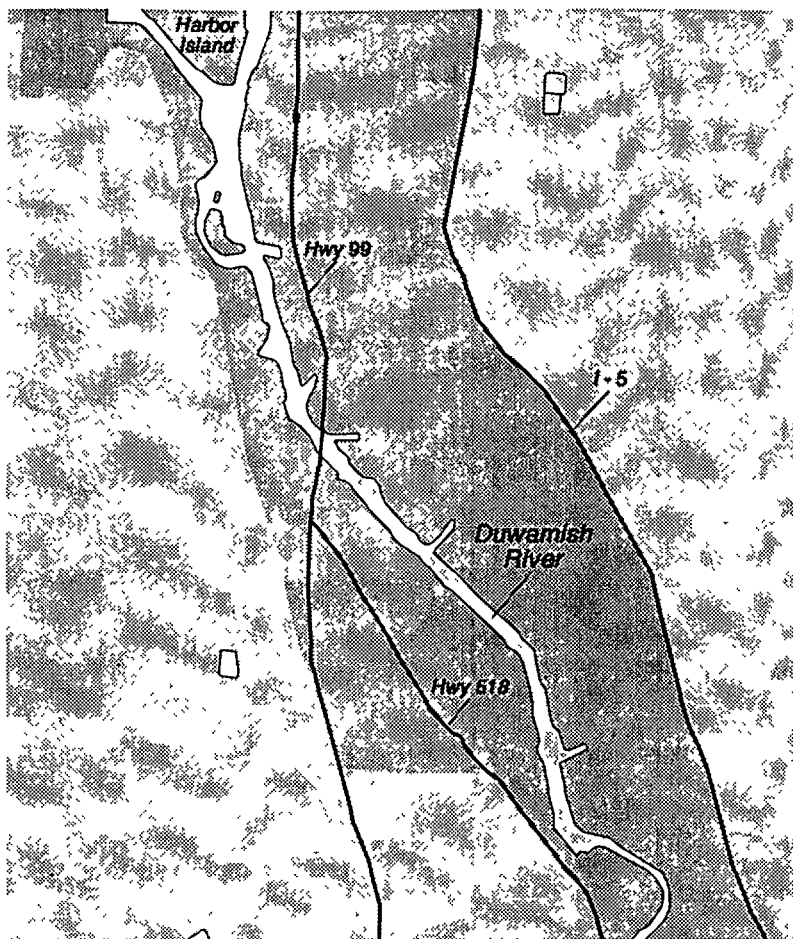
EPA will be releasing fact sheets, such as this one, to keep interested citizens informed. Before sampling begins, EPA will hold a public meeting to discuss the upcoming sampling activities and Superfund process. Please feel free to share this fact sheet with other people you know who may be interested. If there is a mailing label with your address on the back of this fact sheet, you have been added to our mail list and don't need to do anything. If not, and you would like to be added to the mail list, please contact Krista Rave, Outreach Coordinator in Seattle at (206) 553-6686 and leave your name and address.



Who Can I Contact for More Information?

Please contact **David Bennett**, EPA Site Assessment Manager in Seattle, at (206) 553-2103.

For those with impaired hearing or speech, please contact EPA's telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) at (206) 553-1698. To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the numbers listed above



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